

## OTHER IMPACTS

There may be other impacts not covered among the above criteria that are important to people. If so, they should be included among the qualifying criteria. These will typically be effects important to key stakeholders.

## P&G SCREENING CRITERIA

*The P&G (Paragraph 1.6.2(c)) suggest the use of four evaluation criteria -- completeness, effectiveness, efficiency and acceptability -- in the screening of alternative plans. Plans that require substantial activity by others, that is not likely to be forthcoming, in order to reach a “go” appraisal for critical objectives are not complete. Plans that are not appraised as a “go” for planning objectives are not effective. Plans that achieve contributions to objectives at higher costs, whether objectively or subjectively measured, are not efficient. Plans with effects that result in infeasibility are not acceptable. Minimum standards for these four criteria must be established in order to determine whether a plan is worthy of additional consideration.*

These standards will generally be subjective, where each plan is measured on a continuum. Figure 7 illustrates the point conceptually. The thin line represents a subjective minimum standard for each of these criteria. The hypothetical plan has exceeded the standard for completeness and acceptability but it has failed to measure up under the effectiveness and efficiency criteria. As long as a plan exceeds the minimum standard for each criterion it qualifies for further consideration and comparison with other plans. This plan would have to be modified to be more effective and efficient or it will be dropped from further consideration. Each criterion is discussed in turn below.

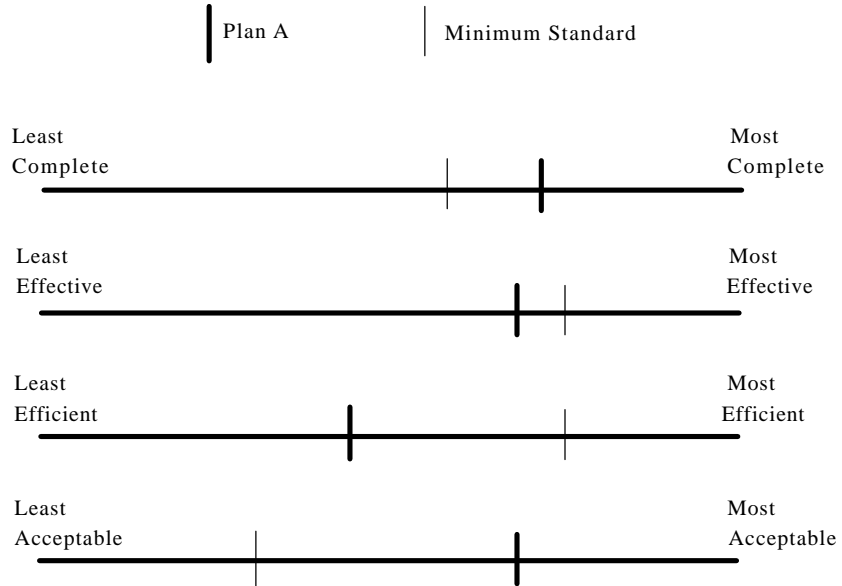
### Completeness

“Completeness is the extent to which a given alternative plan provides and accounts for all necessary investments or other actions to ensure the realization of the planned effects. This may require relating the plan to other types of public or private plans if the other plans are crucial to realization of the contributions to the objective.”  
(P&G Section VI.1.6.2(c)(1))

***A complete alternative  
is...well thought out.***

A complete alternative is one that is well thought out. All the necessary implementation actions have been accounted for in the planning process. During the planning

**Figure 7: Screening and Evaluation Criteria**



process, before plans are likely to be complete, this criterion will be of limited use for screening.

Once plan effects have been identified, it is important to scrutinize the plan to ensure that it includes all that is necessary to realize the plan effects. This means considering those things beyond the planners' control as well as those things beyond the scope of the Corps' program and the local partner's commitment. For example, a plan that relies on a strong economy or world petroleum markets to produce all of the navigation benefits forecast is not as complete as a plan whose benefits do not depend on factors beyond the control of the planners.

To establish the completeness of the plan, it is helpful to list those factors beyond the control of the planners that are required to make the plan effects a reality. If a plan's effects, like project benefits, will not be realized unless there is a strong international economy, dredging of private berths, and relatively peaceful conditions in the oil-producing nations, these factors must be identified. The plan is not complete unless these conditions are met.

### **Effectiveness**

"Effectiveness is the extent to which an alternative plan alleviates the specified problems and achieves the specified opportunities." (P&G Section VI.1.6.2(c)(2))

An effective plan is responsive to the wants and needs of people. An effective plan makes a significant contribution to the solution of some problems and achieves some opportunities. In other words, it contributes to the attainment of the planning objectives.

The most effective alternatives make significant contributions to all the planning objectives. "Effectiveness," then, becomes an imprecise matter of degree. How much does an alternative contribute to how many planning objectives? The answer determines how effective an alternative it is.

In the screening process, it is often possible to identify alternatives that make little or no contribution to the planning objectives. When this is the case, these alternatives can be rejected because they are relatively ineffective. When the formal evaluation process has been completed, the extent of a plan's effectiveness may well be quantified, facilitating a more objective application of this criterion.

### **Efficiency**

"Efficiency is the extent to which an alternative plan is the most cost-effective means of alleviating the specified problems and realizing the specified opportunities, consistent with protecting the Nation's environment." (P&G Section VI.1.6.2(c)(3))

When you think about cost-effectiveness, don't think only about dollar costs. Costs refer not just to the number of dollars that will have to be paid to implement a plan, but to opportunities that will be sacrificed if the plan is implemented.

*Efficiency refers to the allocation of resources. Are resources used efficiently in the construction of a project or the implementation of a plan? Are the outputs produced by the plan produced in an efficient manner? Are the resources that are going to be significantly affected by the plan still going to be available for efficient use by society?*

The more familiar articulation of the criterion of efficiency is **cost-effectiveness**. Of all the ways of developing and implementing a plan, have we identified the lowest cost means of implementation? An obvious question is, is there a cheaper way to accomplish the same planning objectives? If there is, we do not have a cost-effective plan.

The efficiency criterion transcends the NED criterion. When all tangible/monetary and intangible/non-monetary costs are considered, do we have the plan that meets objectives in the least costly fashion? If a plan costs society the loss of some wetlands and there is another way to achieve the same objectives with no or less wetland loss, the plan is not efficient.

Efficiency must be considered in light of all opportunity costs, not just monetary costs. This makes the efficiency criterion considerably more difficult for

planning for the Corps' environmental mission, because planners may have to trade-off increased implementation costs against less environmental losses.

### Acceptability

“Acceptability is the workability and viability of the alternative plan with respect to acceptance by State and local entities and the public and compatibility with existing laws, regulations, and public policies.” (P&G Section VI.1.6.2(c)(4))

***If a plan has opposition...that doesn't make it unacceptable.***

*There are two primary dimensions to acceptability. One we call **implementability**, meaning is it feasible in the technical, environmental, economic, social, and similar senses? The other is the **satisfaction** it brings.* A common error that must be avoided with this criterion is the tendency to equate acceptability with the non-Federal partner's willingness to sign a Project Cooperation Agreement for the plan. It's often thought if they would sign, the plan is acceptable; if they wouldn't, it is not. This is not what acceptability means. If it were, there would be no need for a partnership or a planning process at all. The local partner would need only say, “this is what we want,” and it would become the only acceptable plan.

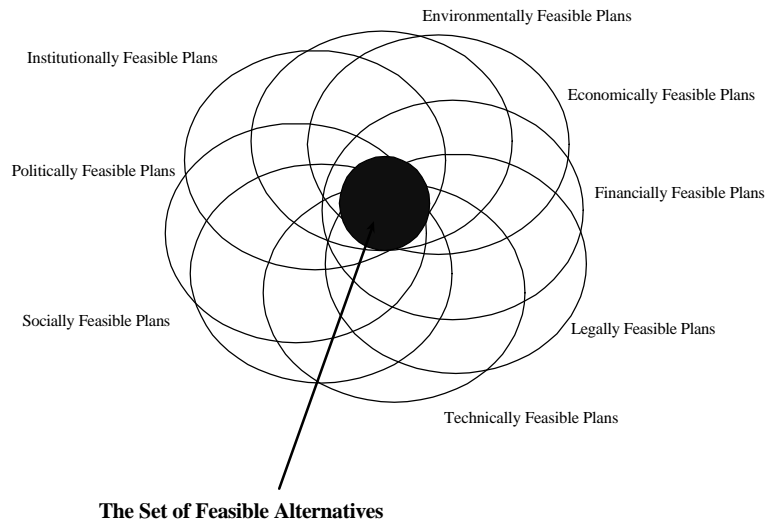
To be acceptable to state and local entities as well as the public, a plan has to be doable. There are many factors that can render a plan infeasible. These factors can generally be categorized as technical (engineering or natural world limitations), economic, financial, environmental, social, political, legal, and institutional. Figure 8 illustrates this notion of feasibility.

If a plan cannot be done for legitimate reasons, it is not feasible. If a plan has opposition or is not the favored plan of the non-Federal partner that does not make it infeasible or unacceptable. That simply makes it unpopular. If a plan requires changes in laws or authorities, that alone doesn't make it unacceptable. That only makes it difficult.

Acceptability can also be defined as the extent to which a plan is welcome or satisfactory. These are qualitative dimensions, not absolutes. If a plan is feasible in a pragmatic sense, in that it could be done, there is no objective way to determine what is welcome or unwelcome, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. This is not a pass/fail criterion.

Acceptability may be the most useful criterion for eliminating potential alternatives. In the formal evaluation stage there will be more fully developed and documented rationales for the elimination of alternatives based on feasibility. Though the satisfaction of a plan will remain subjective, sufficient measurement,

**Figure 8: Screening Plans**



appraisal, and comparison will have been completed to support judgments about which plans and versions of plans are acceptable enough to carry forward for further consideration.

*Not coincidentally, when the team carefully evaluates a plan, they are providing a firm basis for the comparison step. The resulting information about effects will form the basis for the comparison step.*

## **ORGANIZING EVALUATION RESULTS**

***Evaluation can result in a great deal of information.***

Evaluation can result in a great deal of information. That information is useless unless it improves decision-making. To be most useful to decision-makers, it must be effectively organized for consideration by team members, stakeholders, the public and partnership decision-makers for use in the comparison step.

*The P&G established four accounts to facilitate evaluation and the display of the effects of alternative plans. These accounts have been devised to encompass all significant effects of a plan as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and Section 122 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 (PL 91-611, 84 Stat. 1823).*